

## **State Board of Education Subcommittee on Charter Schools**

The State Board of Education has been asked to sponsor charter schools in the Kansas City and St. Louis City Public School Districts. At the present time, some eligible sponsors in Kansas City are continuing to look at charter applications. However, most eligible sponsors of charter schools in St. Louis City are reluctant to sponsor any additional charters until they can better assess the charter schools they currently sponsor.

With eligible sponsors in St. Louis City reluctant to sponsor any more charter schools, applications from St. Louis have been submitted to the State Board of Education for sponsorship. More applications are likely to follow. For this reason, the Subcommittee on Charter Schools recommends that the State Board adopt the following guidelines for use in evaluating schools that have appealed to the State Board for sponsorship:

### **1) Educational Management Organizations v. Independently Operated Charter Schools**

The State Board believes that its sponsorship of charter schools should be limited to a small number of highly qualified applicants that have proposed creative or unique methods. Therefore, a charter contracting with a management company that provides a standard form of operation is unlikely to be sponsored by the State Board of Education. Any charter applicant who submits an application to the State Board that has been denied by a potential sponsor or has contracted with a management company must provide compelling evidence of its competence, creativity and uniqueness. Specifically, the applicant shall provide documentation that the proposed curriculum will significantly improve the academic achievement of students residing in the Kansas City or St. Louis City School Districts.

### **2) Evidence of an Effective Not-for-Profit Board**

Currently, the charter schools law requires a charter school to be governed by a not-for-profit organization. Charter applications submitted to the State Board of Education for sponsorship shall provide assurances and evidence that the not-for-profit board is highly competent, sets school policy and governs operations.

Applications submitted to the State Board for sponsorship must include the following components:

- 1) A list of all current members of the board of directors.
- 2) Resumes/vitas for individual board members.
- 3) How the board members are selected.
- 4) The term each board member will serve.
- 5) A written description of the duties and responsibilities of the board of directors.
- 6) Number of board meetings to be held throughout the year.

In addition, applicants shall maintain their not-for-profit status, hold regularly scheduled meetings, record minutes, comply with all appropriate provisions of the Sunshine law and provide for training of board members. Minutes and board member attendance shall be submitted to the State Board of Education on an agreed upon schedule.

### **3) Curriculum**

The State Board shall sponsor only those charter applicants whose curriculum will not isolate students by ethnicity, culture, special needs and/or gender. Programs that duplicate already successful programs in the school district and/or programs that may negatively impact a court-ordered settlement agreement will not be considered for sponsorship. Additionally, applicants shall have the curriculum cross-referenced to the Show-Me Standards and shall meet the curriculum requirements in place for the current cycle of the Missouri School Improvement Program.

### **4) Number of Schools**

It is the intent of the State Board of Education to give priority to students who are high-risk as defined by the law, as well as to dropouts who re-enter the system.

In order to ensure that charter schools sponsored by the State Board of Education are providing the services for students to achieve the skills that are necessary to succeed in life, the State Board shall limit the number of sponsorships to not more than two charter schools per year. The total number of schools sponsored by the State Board shall not exceed the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's ability to provide adequate assistance and oversight. For purposes of this policy, a charter school is defined as one individual school building.

### **5) Process for Revocation of Charter**

The revocation of a charter shall comply with the timeframes outlined in the law. As such, the State Board shall provide a charter school's board of directors 60 days notice prior to revoking the charter. The law also allows a charter's board of directors to request a hearing before the sponsor within 14 days of receipt of a notice of revocation.

#### **Non-Renewal of Charter**

Renewals of applications shall be based on the charter's compliance with the laws governing charter schools, compliance with the terms of the charter and student performance, much in the same way the MSIP program currently assesses traditional public school performance.

### **6) Timeframes**

Charter applicants submitting applications to the State Board for sponsorship shall do so no later than September 30<sup>th</sup> of the year prior to the charter school's anticipated opening date. (For example, a school wishing to open for the 2002-03 school year should submit their application to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education no later than September 2001). Applications received by the established deadline, will be reviewed and shall receive a response from the State Board of Education not later than January 1<sup>st</sup> of the following year. Opening a charter school is expected to take one year of planning and preparation in cooperation with Department staff.

Applications received after the September 30<sup>th</sup> deadline will be reviewed during the next window of review.

**7) Staffing of Schools**

The law currently allows 20% of a charter schools instructional staff to be non-certificated. Preference will be given to applications where 100% of the instructional staff holds valid Missouri certification.

The application shall contain a thorough discussion of how teachers are selected, including assurances that all staff (certificated and non-certificated) have undergone the necessary background and child abuse registry checks, and the schools plan for utilizing teachers who do not hold a valid teaching certificate.

**8) Other Services**

Preference will be given to charter applications that agree to participate in the federal school lunch program and provide transportation to students who qualify pursuant to state law and State Board rule. Applicants should also include plans for providing Library Media Services to enrolled students.

**9) Length of Charter**

Charter schools approved by the State Board for sponsorship shall have a charter length not to exceed 5 years.

**10) Process for Review of Charter**

By statute, sponsors of charter schools are required, at a minimum, to review the management, operations and performance of a charter school on a two-year cycle.

Schools sponsored by the State Board of Education shall have their performance monitored on a yearly basis. Department charter school staff shall meet with the charter on a regular basis to monitor the ongoing management and operations of the charter. All State Board sponsored charters shall comply with necessary state and federal regulations (i.e. Title I, Special Education). The required performance review will mirror the process currently used for the Missouri School Improvement Program.